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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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MEDICAL PROCEDURES AND HYGIENE AND SANITATION IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY

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Summary : This report contains [redacted] experiences with military hospitals and dispensaries in the following three cases: care and treatment of a broken thumb, removal of an ingrown toe nail, and treatment received for stomach poisoning. Also included is an outline of hygiene instruction and miscellaneous sanitation regulations.

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A. Hygiene Instruction

The teaching of hygiene at the Infantry Academy at LIPNIK MAD BECVOU was part of a two-hour monthly lecture of combined first aid and hygiene. First aid consumed approximately 90 per cent of these two hours. Most of the instruction was given orally by the garrison surgeon or

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his assistants.

The following subjects were covered in the instruction: The necessity for frequent bathing and personal cleanliness, including frequent haircuts, keeping fingernails short and clean, and frequent changing of footwear; the necessity for proper ventilation in squad rooms and head-to-foot sleeping;⁵ the dangers of venereal diseases and methods of prevention; care of the body and general health rules, including proper methods of cooking certain foods, such as pork; the types of foods to eat in order to insure good health; the necessity for adequate exercise and fresh air; and the necessity for constant vigilance on their part, as officers in the future, to insure the good health and cleanliness of the troops they would command.

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B. Enforcement of Hygienic Measures

(1) General

Company officers and the first sergeant inspected the kitchen, troops, squad rooms, and equipment every day for cleanliness. [redacted] particular attention was paid to footwear of the troops. Socks were carefully inspected to determine if they were in good condition and clean, and the soldiers were required to change socks at least every other day. Shoes were required to be shined and/or dubbed regularly, and if a soldier was seen with holes in his shoes, he was punished.

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The regimental surgeon or his assistant inspected the troops, kitchens, and equipment at irregular, unannounced intervals. Every three months all officers and EM were given a physical examination, including a dental check.

The soldier's hair could be no longer than three cm in the summer and five cm during the winter. Only officers and NCO's were required to pay for haircuts.

EM slept on straw mattresses and the straw was required to be changed every six months or oftener.

Laundry was sent out once a week and was returned in about five days. An EM could send as much laundry as he desired; there was no limit on the amount of pieces and no payment was required for laundry service. Cooks wore whites and received free laundry service. Career NCO's were allowed to send their own personal civilian clothing to the laundry free of charge.

Kitchens and cooks were inspected daily by a company officer and the first sergeant in addition to special irregular inspections conducted by the regimental surgeon.

EM were issued two pieces of a yellow soap per month.

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This soap was a regular army soap about 8 x 8 x 6 cm and the words "choice soap" (jadrove mydlo) were embossed on each bar. The soap was to be used for both toilet and laundry.

At the time of induction, troops were given a one-time issue of tooth brush, tooth paste, comb, towel, and one hand-brush. No shaving equipment was issued.

(2) Bathing

Hot water was available only on Saturdays. This was true at all installations. Troops were assigned to the Saturday bathing periods by platoons, and one-half hour was allotted each platoon. Troops could take cold water showers any time during off-duty hours.

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Several cases occurred where soldiers had refused to keep themselves clean and consequently were given forced showers by other soldiers in the unit. The soldiers usually were forceably held down, stripped, and scrubbed with harsh yellow soap and a brush or sand.

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(3) Latrines

it was common practice for troops to dig a hole in the ground when they had to relieve themselves while in the field as part of small units (company or smaller) for short periods of time, and when they did not expect to stay long in one location. When they expected to stay longer than a few hours in one location, they were required to dig latrines.

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it was common practice to place the latrines "down wind" from troop billets and/or mess halls.

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Basic dimensions for latrines was 1 m wide by 1 1/2 m deep. For a squad of men, the latrine had to be at least 3 m long. Officers and EM had separate latrines. Only the officers' latrines were screened.

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Every day it was required that the latrine be sprinkled with chloride of lime. An old latrine had to be covered with at least 1/2 m of earth with a sign placed on top stating the date of closure. The sign designating an old latrine always had to have two zeros drawn or printed thereon. Because of this the common term for latrine among the soldiers was "Nula Nula" (Zero Zero).

(4) Field Mess Sanitation

Garbage from the mess halls, while in the field, was always dumped into a sump pit; basic dimensions of the sump pit were unknown. The sump pit was sprinkled

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with chloride of lime every day. All sump pits [redacted] were covered with a tarpaulin or an improvised cover.

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For the washing of mess gear, three cans were placed near the mess hall. The first can contained hot water; the second can contained lukewarm water in which an unidentified disinfectant had been dissolved; and the third can contained cold water.

Mess gear was scoured by using sand or a wire brush. The water for washing mess gear was heated in water containers built into the stove. The cans used were old salvaged gasoline drums.

(5) Water Purification

The only water purification tablets [redacted] were samples [redacted] at the Infantry Academy; These were small white tablets similar in shape and appearance to an aspirin tablet. According to the instructions [redacted] three tablets were required to purify one liter of water. [redacted]

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[redacted] While in the field, troops drank water delivered in water trailers.

1. [redacted] Comment : [redacted] the dispensary was staffed by approximately 12 persons: one lieutenant colonel (doctor); one senior lieutenant (doctor); one junior lieutenant (doctor); and nine EM (grades unknown).
2. [redacted] Comment : The sick book accompanied individuals reporting to the dispensary and was returned to the company by the last person to be treated.
3. [redacted] Comment : [redacted] the dispensary contained about 30 beds.
4. [redacted] Comment : This civilian hospital was utilized by the troops stationed at MLADA BOLESNAV because there was no military hospital in the vicinity.
5. [redacted] Comment : The official space allotment per man was unknown [redacted] 15 soldiers were billeted in the squad rooms [redacted] The squad rooms were of 16-cubic-m size.

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